

# Harm Reduction in Prison Coalition (AFC)

200 W. Jackson Blvd. #2200 Chicago, IL 60606

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## Condom Distribution in U.S. Correctional Facilities and Canada

Five cities or counties have condom distribution programs in their jails: Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Washington DC, and two states, Vermont and Mississippi, have condom distribution programs in their prisons.

### City/County Jails

#### Los Angeles

- Correct Help is the sole community-based organization that provides condoms to inmates in LA county jails
- Condoms are distributed only in unit K-11, a unit that voluntarily houses only inmates who identify as gay, bisexual, or transgender
- One condom is distributed weekly for each inmate who requests one.
- HIV/AIDS prevention and education is provided
- There is a 30 to 40 percent HIV prevalence rate in the K-11 unit. There is no mandatory HIV testing
- It is estimated that 100 condoms are distributed a week, with 300 individuals having access

#### New York City (Riker's Island)

- Condoms are available in medical clinics
- Inmates can have up to three unused, unopened condoms on their person; more than three is considered contraband
- Sex between inmates is prohibited
- All inmates receive medical exams within 24 hours on arrival, which includes an offer of voluntary HIV testing.

#### Philadelphia

- Condoms are sold in the commissary, and are distributed for free on the medication cart, during sick call, and in social worker's offices
- The annual amount of condoms distributed is 15,000-20.
- Condom distribution began in the late 1980s. In 2006, Act Up Philadelphia surveyed inmates and found condoms were difficult to obtain, and that correctional officers considered them contraband. This led to condoms being sold in the commissary to send a clear message that they are not contraband.
- Two community based organizations, Action AIDS and Philadelphia Fight, provide multiple discharge services, including case management, care outreach, and counseling
- There are 5 main jails, with 8,500 inmates
- HIV/AIDS testing within the jails is voluntary

#### San Francisco

- Forensic AIDS Project is an organization within the San Francisco Department of Public Health that provides condoms to inmates
- Inmates obtain condoms by first participating in a HIV/AIDS prevention program where inmates meet with a health educator one on one. Once they complete the education and counseling program they can request condoms from the health center

***Based on information collected from interviews with officials from prison, jails and community based organizations. For more information, contact Rev Doris Green 312-922-2322 or [dgreen@aidschicago.org](mailto:dgreen@aidschicago.org) or Anthony Radulovich (Intern) 312-922-2322 [aradulovich@aidschicago.org](mailto:aradulovich@aidschicago.org)***

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- The program began in 1987

## Washington, D.C.

- Two organizations provide HIV/AIDS prevention education inside of the DC jail, Family and Medical Counseling Services, Inc. (FMCS), and Miracle Hands
- The DC jail is unique in that the condom distribution program is run through official channels
- Condoms are given to inmates per their request, and each inmate receives pre and post-test counseling
- HIV/AIDS education classes are offered by health workers and inmates can be trained to become peer educators and participate in support groups
- The jail does not provide rapid testing; Conventional testing is voluntary

## State Prisons

### Vermont

- There are two organizations that provide HIV/AIDS prevention education and HIV testing, Vermont CARES and Imani
- Vermont CARES provides HIV presentations and rapid testing to 6 of the 9 prisons (Brigham)
- Imani provides substance abuse, HIV/AIDS, and STI presentations along with rapid HIV testing to Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility (Robinson)
- Condoms are distributed by the health center at the prisons, where inmates must make the request (Brigham and Robinson)
- Female prisoners can gain access to dental dams per their request (Brigham)

### Mississippi

- Mississippi Correctional Facility provides two condoms to married inmates to use during conjugal visits that last up to one hour (MI Department of Corrections, "Conjugal Visitation")
- Birth control is the primary purpose of their condom distribution program.
- HIV+ and inmates with an STI are not allowed conjugal visits unless given special permission
- The program began in 1992

## Condoms Accessibility in Neighboring Country

- The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) identifies condoms accessibility in its correction facilities as a productive prevention measure for good prison health which contributes to good public health.
- In CSC states it will be guided by public health principles in managing infectious diseases in the penitentiary environment.
- CSC could not recall any incident where condoms were used as contraband or weapons since the implementation of its condom accessibility policy.
- There is no evidence showing that condom for people in corrections have harmed correctional staff in CSC.

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